

ANG

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EDITORIAL

Take advantage of the grave political crisis of the ruling system!

Advance and further strengthen the revolutionary movement!



The aggravation of the political crisis of the ruling reactionary system is creating a situation that is ever favorable to the rapid advance and all-sided strengthening of the revolutionary movement. The revolutionary forces should firmly carry out tasks and untiringly work to unite and lead the people in their millions to overthrow the ruling regime; and militate and organize them for the more protracted and difficult revolutionary struggle.

The ruling system is suffering from a grave political crisis. It is marked by broadening people's mobilizations, open conflict among the reactionary factions and the extreme isolation of the ruling Estrada regime. Despite a consensus among the different factions of the ruling class that the political crisis needs to be resolved quickly, they are hard-pressed finding a solution because of tangled personal and factional ambitions, interests of big business,

criminal syndicates and others.

It is a good thing that Luis "Chavit" Singson bolted the Estrada-Atong Ang criminal syndicate and testified against widespread corruption and the criminal operations and rottenness of the Estrada government. This has encouraged the anti-Estrada reactionaries to come forward and unite with the call to struggle to oust Estrada and has sparked the current political crisis of the ruling system.

The anti-Estrada united front of patriotic and democratic forces continues to broaden. This is composed of organizations of the basic masses of workers and peasants, women, youth, professionals, government employees as well as major religious sects, academic institutions and anti-Estrada politicians.

There is formal and informal, open and secret coordination and cooperation in the effort to end the Estrada regime. Jaime Cardinal Sin

and Corazon Aquino have called for Estrada to resign or take a leave of absence. Slowly, the resolution to impeach Estrada is gaining support in congress while the Senate continues to conduct hearings on the jueteng case, providing more details of the illegal operations and corruption of the Estrada government. In the mass media, the several hundred million-peso mansions of Estrada and his wives are being exposed, further fuelling the people's ire.

All these contribute to the overall effort to overthrow the Estrada government. But more than anything else, attention and efforts should be directed towards the more democratic and powerful participation of millions of people in gigantic street protest actions. The latter's importance has been proven by the EDSA uprising of 1986 that, along with a military and police rebellion, overthrew Marcos.

The continued broadening of protest actions will be the determining factor in the struggle against Estrada. Because it provides strength and gives weight to all other methods of ousting Estrada, there should be cooperation among all anti-Estrada forces in this endeavor.

Estrada is laboring under the illusion that the political crisis rocking his power will pass. He is working to break the anti-Estrada united front by dishing out populist slogans and mocking broadening protests, claiming that these are being instigated by his "wealthy" political enemies. He uses the urban poor to put up zarzuelas of land title distribution; and

like Marcos, Estrada organizes fanatic loyalists, using government funds to bus them into pro-Estrada rallies.

In order to justify the suppression of mass actions, Estrada employs scare tactics, claiming that there are bombing and arson plots. But these steps only further enrage the people and push them to further wage resistance.

Estrada is also using the small counter-revolutionary groups, particularly, Sanlakas-BMP. By calling for the resignation of all national officials of the reactionary government and a "change in the system", these groups hope to cause a rift in the anti-Estrada united front, erroneously broaden the target of the protests in order to weaken or deflect the attack on Estrada and create the illusion that the system of government can be changed without undertaking revolutionary struggle or through the simple removal or resignation of officials. They could also launch insurrectionist schemes, such as burning buses, destroying property and others in order to justify Estrada's option of imposing martial law.

All of Estrada's plans to stay in power, however, are sure to be swept away by the wave of protests. His regime is tottering. It is not long before it is overthrown the way the Marcos dictatorship was overthrown.

U.S. IMPERIALISM HAS ACTUALLY ALREADY DROPPED ESTRADA because it has become a liability to the stability of the ruling system. The most glaring signal is the IMF's denial of the new \$310-million loan package after it refused to allow a higher government budget deficit target.

US imperialism is pushing for the quick resolution of the crisis of the ruling system. It is worried that as the crisis extends, the cracks in the ruling system, including the possibility of armed confrontations among the opposing reactionary factions, will become deeper and more difficult to mend. The US is worried as well that this crisis will engender the broadening and strengthening of the legal democratic movement and of the armed revolutionary movement in the countryside.

Despite the signals from the US, Estrada stubbornly clings to power. He has rejected all legal options, including his resignation, taking a leave of absence and calling for snap election. Because of this, the prospects of quickly and smoothly resolving the political crisis of the ruling system grows dim. On the other hand, this opens the opportunity for protest actions to broaden and strengthen until they gather sufficient strength to overthrow Estrada.

Whatever the method that puts an end to the Estrada regime and whoever takes his place as head of the reactionary state, the ruling system will not enjoy stability as a result. The room for peaceful accommodation and division of spoils among the opposing factions of bureaucrat capitalist operations and other benefits and privileges of state power has grown ever narrower.

The new government will have to reckon with the people's



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◀ democratic and patriotic interests. The mass actions that will bring down Estrada will surely raise the people's consciousness, determination and capability to fight. The new government will also have to confront the ever growing strength of the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside. It will not be as easy for this new government to unrestrainedly abuse, and trample with impunity upon, the national and democratic interests of the people for fear that it will suffer the same fate that befell Marcos and that shall befall Estrada.

IT IS CERTAIN THAT THE GOVERNMENT THAT will be established after the overthrow of the Estrada regime will also become a puppet of US imperialism and will serve as the caretaker of the neocolonial state. The revolutionary process of liberating the Philippines from imperialist control is much more complicated and difficult than overthrowing the Estrada government.

Thus revolutionary forces should take advantage of the current political crisis of the ruling system in order to rapidly advance and strengthen the revolutionary movement.

Towards this, the Executive Committee-Central Committee of the Party stated on October 14 the following tasks: (1) launch tactical offensives and intensify armed struggles; (2) intensify protests and mass struggles; (3) broaden and invigorate antifeudal campaigns and other mass campaigns in the countryside while intensifying guerrilla warfare; (4) daringly broaden links and develop expertise in united front tactics; (5) expand propaganda work and political education; and (6) daringly expand the Party without letting a single undesirable in. It is the responsibility of all Party members and units to study this statement and appropriately carry out these tasks in their areas of responsibility.

The revolutionary forces are taking the lead in exposing and opposing the puppet, fascist and rotten Estrada government. It will remain at the forefront of the effort to expose and oppose the succeeding puppet government that will be put in charge of the neocolonial state while continuing to carry out the more strategic tasks of accumulating armed and organized strength step-by-step and crushing the enemy bit by bit until the situation is ripe for the overthrow of the ruling system. **AB**

The economy continues to decline amid the political crisis

THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY CONTINUES TO DECLINE AMID THE INTENSIFYING POLITICAL crisis of the ruling system. Because the Philippine economy is backward and has no basic industries, it is in permanent crisis and easily runs aground due to political convulsions.

Within a month, the value of the peso against the dollar slid from a little more than P46 to a dollar, to more than P50 to a dollar. Even "analysts" now refuse to make forecasts on how much more the peso will decline.

In a desperate attempt to stem the peso's fall, the Central Bank has continually raised interest rates in order to attract financial speculators to buy pesos. Banks have raised their lending rates by as much as 18 percentage points, to as high as 35%.

This has had disastrous effects, especially for local small and medium-scale businesses whose production is dependent on imported components. With these businesses' low rates of profit, they easily fold up under the weight of high interest rates. In the past months before the rapid decline of the peso, there has already been a precipitous drop in imports. The closure of Sarao Motors, Inc., one of the more notable assemblers of passenger jeeps, highlights the sharp decline in local production.

Foreign investments dropped by 21.4% in the second quarter from P10.7 billion to P8.44 billion. A further decline is expected in the third quarter, especially after the economy was given negative ratings by foreign banks and financial institutions.

The Philippine stock market is said to be among the five worst performers in the world. Speculators in stocks avoid it like the plague. In a few days, the stock exchange fell by 87 points from 1,373 (October 5) to 1,282 points (October 16).

Government funds have already dried up. As early as September, the government's budget deficit had already soared to P82.982 billion, P35 billion more than the P62.5 billion target for the year. The government estimates that the deficit will reach P110 billion by the end of the year, almost equal to the P111.7 billion deficit in 1999, especially after the IMF refused to release more loans and the Philippine government was unable to meet targets for the sale of public corporations.

The toiling masses suffer the most from the intensification of the economic crisis. Unemployment continues to rise. Based on official government statistics, the rate of unemployment has reached 11%, the highest since 1986. In fact, the number of unemployed is 28 million or more than 56% of the labor force. The P26.50-wage increase ordered by the government is woefully inadequate, way off the P125-wage increase demanded by workers and not enough to enable them to cope with the continued increase in the prices of commodities due to the rising prices of petroleum products. The big oil companies are set to hike oil prices by as much as one peso per liter in the first week of November.

As the political crisis of the ruling system worsens, the economy will continue to go under. Still, even if the current political crisis is resolved, the economic crisis will persist, setting off worse political crises for the ruling system in the future. **AB**

OPPRESSED SITUATION OF TEACHERS

The country's teachers have long been oppressed. And their oppression is intensifying with the Estrada regime's faithful compliance with the IMF-World Bank's dictates to systematically reduce the budget for social services, including education. The regime is more interested in squandering money on its destructive war against the people rather than improving the teachers' lot.

TEACHERS IN THE COUNTRY RECEIVE VERY low salaries. Despite the National Statistics Office's declaration that the monthly poverty threshold is P13,260, a teacher's gross basic salary amounts to only P9,464.50. In the National Capital Region, private school teachers' monthly salaries amount to only P6,000 on the average and their take home pay amounts to only P4,967.02. In some other regions, teachers take home only P2,200 monthly as in the case of Our Lady of Purity Academy in Negros Occidental.

Worse, the regime exacts so many deductions from teachers' meager salaries. As a Senate Committee on Education, Culture and Sports survey of teachers reveals, 96% of respondents receive only half of their monthly salaries due to deductions; and 25,584 say their salaries are reduced by more than 50%.

Because their salaries can hardly meet their families' daily needs, teachers are compelled to borrow from private lenders. In 1999, unpaid debts incurred by 300,000 public school teachers amounted to P10 billion. These private lenders,

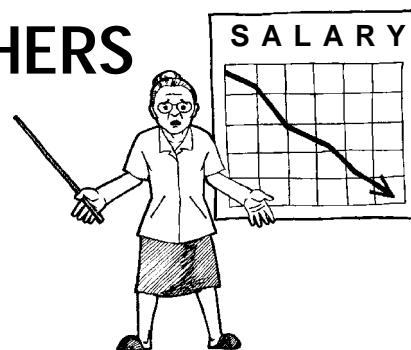
numbering 112, are accredited by the DECS no less and impose a 36-108% interest. The 10 leading private lenders earned a total of P5.5 billion or 74% of the P7.5 billion deducted from teachers' salaries in 1998.

The DECS connives with these loan sharks to take advantage of the teachers' desperation. It receives a 2% share of teachers' debt payments, and collects this through salary deductions, saying that this is supposed to be a service fee paid by the private lenders to DECS. The DECS claims that half of these service fees is meant to augment the salaries of clerks who collect the fees. The remaining amount allegedly goes to the Provident Fund which is supposedly intended for teachers' assistance programs. The status of this fund is unclear.

There are also cases where salary deductions for debt payments continue even if the teachers have already paid off their debts, all because of chaotic record-keeping.

Instead of raising teachers' salaries to prevent them from ending up buried neck-deep in debt, the DECS and the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) even plan to profit from the teachers' privation by "improving" the GSIS's credit system.

ALONG WITH THE BUDGET FOR OTHER social services, the regime has been cutting that for education. In spite of the ever pressing need for more teachers, the regime plans to dismiss even more public school teachers. Instead of improving state colleges and universities that do not pass government standards on quality education, they will be closed down or merged with bigger and better



schools, dismissing more teachers in the process. The Commission on Higher Education itself projects that the number of state colleges and universities (109 in all) will be reduced by half as a result of these mergers.

When teachers wage struggles for just salaries and benefits, the regime issues orders that force them to choose between their struggle and their job security. For instance, to block their struggle for a P3,000-across the board salary increase, the regime issued an order, through the Professional Regulation Commission and Civil Service Commission, stating that teachers who have not yet passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers would be laid off.

The PRC has also issued a stern warning that violators of the policy, school owners and teachers alike, shall be penalized with six months to five years in prison and pay P5,000 to P20,000 in fines.

On May 10, DECS Sec. Andrew Gonzales announced that teachers will be given only P3,000 as clothing/uniform allowance despite the fact that the General Appropriations Act provides P4,000 for this. The DECS claimed that release of the P1,000-balance is subject to the availability of funds.

Health services and benefits for the overworked teachers are also far from sufficient. Teachers are entitled to only P37.50 monthly from ►



A TOXIC LEGACY

U.S. imperialism and the Estrada regime continue to neglect the welfare of hundreds of victims of contamination by the toxic waste left behind when American troops withdrew from their former military bases in Clark and Subic in 1992.

The victims also continue to forge ranks to condemn such neglect and demand that the US and Philippine governments clean up the poison left at the bases and extend appropriate compensation to the victims.

GROWING NUMBER OF VICTIMS. Since 1995, more than 126 persons from communities within the former Clark Air Base in Pampanga and Subic Naval Base in Zambales have died due to exposure to toxic waste in the military bases. No less than 174 persons from these areas have also been documented to be suffering from

serious illnesses. Most of them are afflicted with cancer.

Many of the victims are children like six-year-old Crizel Valencia, who died in July from leukemia. Crizel's family was among the victims of the Mount Pinatubo eruption resettled by the government at the Clark Air Base Command evacuation center despite the dangers posed by the contaminated water in the area. Other victims who died in July are seven-year-old Rogelio Palo and 32-year-old Marian Basilio, both due to acute anemia and kidney disease.

Two-hundred seventy-two (272) more victims are from the evacuation center where Crizel's family was resettled. Twenty-eight (28) live in a depressed community right across the former Subic Naval Base.

QUEST FOR JUSTICE. On July 20, relatives of 300 victims filed a case against the US government and the Estrada regime, holding them accountable for their criminal negligence. The victims are demanding damages amounting to \$102 billion from the US government and P52 billion from the ►

◄ **Medicare.** Almost 20% of public school teachers do not have homes of their own. The regime's housing program merely profits from them.

NEITHER ARE THE TEACHERS' WORKING CONDITIONS DESIRABLE. Respondents to a poll of teachers say that they teach in classrooms that have no ceilings (25%), no proper lighting (27%), poor ventilation (27%), no electricity (55%), no running water (84%) and no toilets (62%).

Owing to the lack of teachers, they are forced to handle very large classes (up to 80 students). Due to the insufficient number of classrooms, many teachers teach in the shade of trees, in gyms, in parking lots, along corridors and other places not conducive to teaching and learning.

Based on the ideal ratio of one teacher to 45 students, the DECS would need 116,233 new teachers. The DECS claims, however, that it could hire only 5,890 this year, 605 of whom would be assigned to office work.

The regime further obliges teachers to take on tasks other than teaching without due compensation. They are forced to count and guard ballots during elections and are mobilized by the reactionary government to take censuses.

THE DECS IS REEKING WITH CORRUPTION. FUNDS FOR TEACHERS

and students are being spent by high-ranking officials for personal luxuries. In September, for instance, Secretary Gonzales' malversation of P24 million to purchase 24 luxury vehicles was exposed.

In the first week of October, it was reported that seven high-ranking officials of the DECS in Camarines Norte were set to undergo investigation for selling teaching appointments. Some applicants for teaching jobs were asked to pay in order to get hired or to receive regular appointments.

TEACHERS ARE RESISTING THE REGIME'S NEGLECT OF THEIR welfare and of the country's entire educational system. In the past year, teachers militantly struggled for a P3,000 across the board salary increase, amelioration allowance and other benefits. The Estrada regime was compelled to grant a 10% hike. The teachers achieved a partial victory; but because the raise was insufficient, their struggle for just salaries and benefits continues. On August 18, seven major organizations of public school teachers demanded a P2000-increase in their take home pay.

It is correct for teachers to continue building up their unity and intensify their struggle for their rights. They must also strengthen their solidarity with other sectors to oust the US-Estrada regime and resist the rotten ruling system. **AB**

Estrada regime. A related case will also be filed in the US.

Two-hundred (200) other victims are set to file their own case against the culpable parties. Aside from the victims of toxic waste contamination, families of civilians who were killed or wounded during training of American troops in firing ranges around Subic since the 1970s will also be among the plaintiffs. Many of these victims are impoverished folk who scavenged around the base and Aeta tribespeople who lived and hunted in the jungles where US troops trained.

Prior to this, a class suit had already been filed in 1992 by 1,000 former workers of the Ship Repair Facility at Subic Naval Base who developed asbestosis (a lung disease resulting from asbestos inhalation) after decades of stripping asbestos from US Navy ships without adequate protection.

All in all, from 1984 to 1991, there have been 1,259 cases filed against the US government by people of different countries victimized by various forms of devastation wrought by US imperialism. The combined value of damage payments sought in these class suits amounts to \$25.8 billion. The \$102-billion class suit filed by victims in the Philippines is by far the biggest.

SEVERE CONTAMINATION. The issue of toxic waste contamination in Clark and Subic first gained prominence in a report issued by the US General Accounting Office (US GAO) in 1992 detailing contamination of the soil and groundwater in former US military bases both at home and overseas.

Among the toxic substances found in Clark and Subic are polychlorinated biphenyl, lead and

other dangerous chemicals that were merely buried in landfills; and petroleum products like the solvent benzene that leaked from a 93-kilometer pipeline connecting the two military bases and contaminated surrounding ricefields and irrigation water.

Aside from the US GAO, the US Department of Defense, World Health Organization and some private US companies have all confirmed such contamination. Studies have also indicated the unusually high incidence of leukemia and other types of cancer in communities around the base, aside from the abnormally high number of persons afflicted with diseases of the kidney, lungs, skin and nervous system and women who suffered miscarriages and stillbirths and gave birth to infants with congenital disorders.

It is estimated that 26 to 47 sites within the former US military bases are contaminated by toxic waste (at least 16 in Clark and 10 in Subic) based on studies by the government and other independent organizations.

CRIMINAL NEGLIGENCE. The number of victims of toxic waste contamination is sure to rise as the US and Philippine governments continue to refuse to clean up the military bases.

It is a policy of the US Department of Defense to escape its obligation to clean up any toxic contamination discovered in its military bases in other countries after its troops have departed, claiming this to be the responsibility of the host countries' governments.

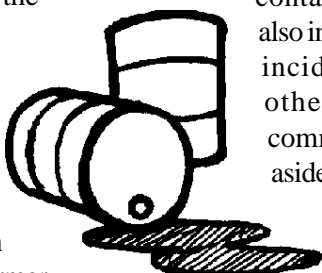
Like its imperialist master, the Estrada government has not extended any assistance to the victims. The Philippine General Hospital, National Kidney and Transplant Institute,

Philippine Heart Center and other government hospitals have not provided them the service they deserve allegedly due to lack of funds.

Proof of their denial of the problem and neglect of the victims' welfare is the non-coverage of military bases in an environmental protection accord signed by Estrada and US President William Clinton in July. Also useless is an executive order issued by Estrada in January ordering the formation of a task force to clean up the bases since all the latter could do is to "implore" the US to undertake the cleanup.

IT IS EVIDENT THAT US IMPERIALISM WILL never voluntarily face up to its responsibilities to the victims of toxic waste contamination. Not a single representative of the US or Philippine government attended the first hearing on the case filed by the 300 victims which was held in Angeles City in September. The 1992 case filed by victims of asbestosis has resulted only in "partial payments" to the victims ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars. Meanwhile, many of the ailing victims have died.

It is necessary to tirelessly expose, condemn and hold US imperialism and its puppet regimes accountable for their crimes against the victims of toxic waste contamination. We must link this struggle with the struggle against US imperialism and its co-conspirator, the Estrada regime, for wreaking havoc on the entire people's lives and livelihood. So must we also link this struggle with the struggle of victims in other countries and with the broad anti-imperialist movement advancing worldwide. Only the firm unity and resolute resistance of all oppressed and exploited peoples will overthrow US imperialism and mete justice to its victims. **AB**



Under the VFA

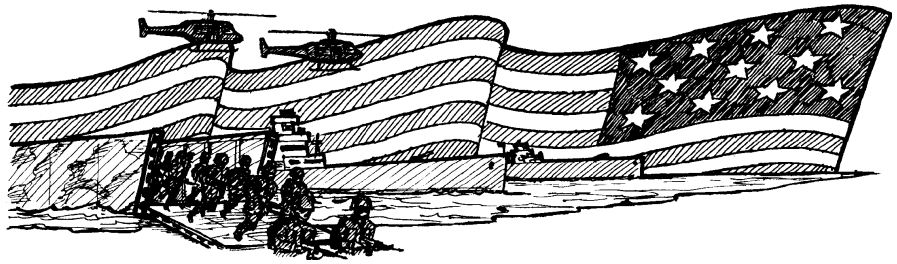
Further imperialist aggression

More than a year has passed since the reactionary senate ratified the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). Through this and other military agreements, the US continues to provide strategic, logistical, intelligence and moral support to the reactionary AFP. US imperialism would like to ensure that it could rely on the puppet armed forces to suppress the revolutionary movement in the Philippines and safeguard the joint dictatorship of the US and local reactionary classes in the country and that the AFP remains an effective instrument in advancing US interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

The following series of military trainings held this year after Balikatan 2000 in January-March provide vivid proof of heightening US presence and military activity in different parts of the country:

Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training or CARAT 2000. First held in the Philippines (Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija) in June, CARAT's objective was to strengthen cooperation between the American and Philippine Marine Corps, which "may one day fight side-by-side in the same battlefield" and train troops in patrol tactics and techniques, squad and platoon small arms live fire and placing demolition. This is a series of military exercises between the US and Asian countries.

Flash Piston 007. This comprised two training exercises held from August 4 to August 28 in Toledo City,



Cebu participated in by a US Navy SEALs 16-man team and a team from the Philippine Navy Special Warfare Group. Flash Piston 007 included underwater demolition, weapons familiarization, sniper training, direct actions and field training exercises.

Balance Piston 00-05. Held from August 15 to September 22 in Clark Air Base, Pampanga and Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija, Balance Piston 00-05 involved a combined "jump school" training of 90 members of the "A-Team" (better known as the elite Green Berets unit or US Special Forces), the US Air Force 35th Special Operations Group and the Philippine Army's Special Operations Command. The Green Berets have expertise in conducting commando operations in any kind of environment and have the capacity to develop, organize, equip, train and advise or direct special operations of local forces of up to battalion size in different countries.

Marsur vex 00-04. Comprising training in coordinated intelligence operations, it was held on September 26-28 along the coasts of Mindoro Occidental and Pangasinan. Members of the US Navy and Philippine Navy and Air Force participated in this training.

Palah 01-01. Currently being held in the towns of Subic and San Antonio, Zambales, Palah 01-01 participants are elements of the Philippine Navy and US Navy SEALs. It began on October 16 and is set to end in the first week of November.

The supposed purpose of these trainings is to "establish regional security to counter piracy, terrorism and other crimes, as well as to protect evacuation centers and cope with natural calamities." But as they are generally characterized by training on land, air and sea commando operations, paratrooping and small-unit operations, the beefing up of potential rapid deployment forces as well as the use of tactical satellite communication, burst transmission, high-frequency radios and global positioning for communication systems, the trainings are evidently directed towards the pursuit and annihilation of revolutionary movements launching guerrilla warfare.

These are all within the framework of the US' forward deployment strategy, a main component of which is the permanent presence of the US Navy's Seventh Fleet in the Asia-Pacific region. Through this strategy, the US is confident that it can swiftly deploy troops anywhere in the ►

◀ Asia-Pacific to the Middle East where it has a war of aggression. The US has access to seaports, airports and other facilities in countries like the Philippines where it has an existing VFA or other military agreements.

Aside from the Philippines, the US has bilateral military agreements with Thailand, South Korea, Japan and Australia. These countries launch about 300 military exercises in Asia every year.

Meanwhile, the US has further strengthened its military relations with the puppet regime in the Philippines. When Estrada visited his imperialist master in July, one of the main items on the agenda was a request for military aid for the AFP. In response, US President William Clinton granted Estrada military equipment amounting to \$105 million: eight UH-1H or Huey helicopters, 100 trucks, spare parts for the repair of eight C-130 airplanes, one Coast Guard cutter and two patrol boats.

That the visits of imperialist envoys US Defense Secretary William Cohen and US Pacific troops commander Adm. Dennis Blaire were timed with the joint military exercises on September 15 and September 24 respectively, again indicate the US' seriousness in ensuring that the AFP and the reactionary Estrada regime remain loyal and effective instruments of counterrevolution in the Philippines and Asia. **AB**



The United Nations **Apologist for imperialism**

The United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit was held in September 2000 amid intensifying rage and protests against imperialist “globalization” by the world’s peoples. In different parts of the world, from Seattle to Prague, workers, peasants, women, the youth and other oppressed people continue to pour into the streets to roundly condemn

neoliberal policies and the role played by the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The UN—the supposed representative of the international community—is ordinarily used to give a humanitarian and charitable face to imperialist dictates and intervention while the more hard-line agenda are coursed through fully controlled agencies like the WB-IMF-WTO, if not enforced through direct unilateral military aggression.

In the recently held Millennium Summit, the UN made the “eradication of world poverty and war” its main agenda allegedly because these were “insults” to humanity. As an ►

Abuses by American troops

THE BALIKATAN 2000 MILITARY EXERCISES HELD IN JANUARY-March had already victimized minorities and other ordinary civilians. But just as Balikatan was coming to a close, three American soldiers mauled taxi driver Marcelo Batistil in Cebu on March 6. The soldiers belonged to the USS Blue Ridge which anchored in Cebu before returning to its main headquarters.

The three soldiers were not on official duty when they beat up Batistil. But instead of being penalized under Philippine laws, they were repatriated and their case left to the US courts to decide. This violated the very provisions of the perverted VFA.

In the last week of June, Arnelo Gabiola, 18, and his cousin Rolley Narvares, 17, were killed, and Jordan Villarina, 11, was wounded, when an M79 grenade exploded while they were gathering firewood from an area in Toledo City, Cebu where Flash Piston 007 was held. The Toledo local government was never informed about the use of the grounds of the Atlas Consolidated Mining Development Corp. from August 14 to 19 as a firing range by around 30 soldiers from the US Navy SEALs and Philippine Navy. Besides this, no warning was issued to advise the public regarding the exercise. Neither did the troops perform their obligation to clean up the area where the exercise was held. To date, the US has not admitted its responsibility for the loss and injury suffered by the victims.

Meanwhile, prostitution thrives once again in areas covered by Balikatan in Clark and Subic years after the US military bases were dismantled in 1991. The VFA has engendered the rampant exploitation of women and children who are driven to prostitution because of extreme poverty. **AB**

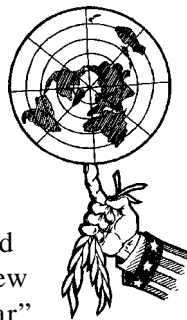
◀ apologist for imperialism, the UN conceals the reality that the widespread inequality of countries and peoples is caused by the plunder perpetrated by imperialists in collaboration with the ruling classes of neocolonies and their oppression of the world's peoples. Similarly, the UN absolved imperialism of its crimes against humanity by declaring that it is poverty that causes war and not the unrelenting aggression and belligerency of imperialists and their local henchmen against peoples in resistance.

Imperialists in control of the UN admit that a “new world disorder” prevails instead of the much-ballyhooed “new order” after the “Cold War”. Neither could their paid economists and “experts” deny that instead of the growth and prosperity promised by “globalization”, there is intensifying crisis and poverty. According to studies by the UN and WB, 2.8 billion people (almost half of the world's population) are living on the poverty line with another billion living in absolute poverty.

But turning back on past proclamations of triumph is not a simple recognition of the glaring reality that imperialism has aggravated the already miserable state of vast numbers of the world's peoples. This supposedly critical view of “globalization” is also impelled by their objective to consolidate their ranks, restrengthen themselves, regain the initiative and give momentum once more to neoliberalism and liberalization, deregulation and privatization policies.

After long-winded rhetoric, the UN, through its secretary general

Kofi Annan, defended major imperialist policies to the hilt by arguing that they had more benefits than negative effects. He declared to the UN that the only way to counter the severe effects of “globalization” is through further “globalization”. Imperialists are incapable of escaping the reactionary and narrow-minded view that all international problems will be solved by their charity in the form of “condoning” the debts of the poorest countries and increasing supposed humanitarian and developmental aid.



In chorus with the World Bank and IMF, the UN blames poverty on the absence or lack of economic growth among countries and inequalities brought about by technological and work changes, discrimination against women and excessive trade regulation. While saying that “globalization” may aggravate these problems, the UN strongly denies that these are the direct effects of neoliberalism. This lends a decidedly hollow ring to its ambitious targets of reducing poverty incidence and its agencies’ other “humanitarian” programs.

Amid widespread world disorder, imperialists, particularly the US, are pushing for the further buildup of the UN’s “peacekeeping” forces in order to use their “humanitarian” intervention as a mask to conceal their blatant aggression against regions where their interests are at stake. The agency has institutionalized the practice of “suspending” the sovereignty of a country experiencing internal armed conflict

and justifies intensifying and expanding military aggression against countries opposed to its policies.

The UN has also assigned its own agencies and the IMF, WB, WTO and other imperialist institutions as the implementors of this “new” program against poverty and war. It obscures the reality that its agencies are important instruments of imperialist plunder. It covers up the devastation and enslavement wrought by their programs, especially of the IMF and WB. In admitting that changes are necessary in their structure and practice, the UN would have it appear that it heeds the grievances of the people, thereby making imperialist policies and programs acceptable once more.

But despite having been forced to admit the prevalence of world disorder, the UN and imperialists continue to belittle the growing protests against “globalization” that are now rapidly turning into widespread people’s resistance to the world capitalist system and its crises. Nonetheless, they could no longer conceal the devastation wrought on the people by their neoliberal “economic model” of development. Their very institutions have been wracked by internal conflicts and their experts have their heads spinning, trying to seek a “new model”.

The “new world disorder” shows the depths of the crisis of the world capitalist system. The proletariat of the world should rightfully take advantage of this crisis to advance their class interest and the interests of all oppressed people towards the total overthrow of imperialism. **AB**



PEASANTS LAUNCH SUCCESSFUL MARCH- CARAVAN

THOUSANDS OF POOR PEASANTS from Northern and Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog launched a week-long march-caravan in the third week of October to expose and oppose widespread violations of human rights as well as rampant land-use conversion and landgrabbing from peasants in the countryside, push for the implementation of genuine land reform and demand the ouster of Estrada.

The march-caravan was successfully launched despite several instances of harassment by the police and military against the demonstrators before they reached Metro Manila.

Highlighting the peasants' protest action was a rally at Mendiola on October 20 where the demonstrators denounced the Estrada regime for its grave accountabilities to the peasant class and cried out their desire to remove him from power. The night before, at a torch-lit vigil held in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform, the peasants condemned the Estrada regime's bogus land reform program. The demonstrators also held programs in towns where they spent the night. **AB**

ALLIANCE FORMED, SERIES OF RALLIES HELD TO DEMAND ESTRADA'S RESIGNATION

A MULTISECTORAL ALLIANCE, THE "ESTRADA RESIGN MOVEMENT", WAS formed in October to lead the movement to force Joseph Estrada to voluntarily resign or be ousted.

Tens of thousands of people from various classes, sectors and political forces launched a series of protest actions in the second half of October to cry "Erap resign!" following Estrada's involvement in the jueteng scandal exposed by Luis "Chavit" Singson as well as other criminal activities.

On October 18, up to 20,000 people massed up along Ayala Avenue in Makati City to manifest their desire to remove Estrada from power. Among the rally speakers were representatives of militant organizations, former military rebels, church people, businessmen and anti-Estrada politicians. As with the massive rallies in the 1980s against the Marcos fascist dictatorship, confetti rained from towering buildings in Makati. Different groups and organizations unfurled their varicolored banners, all of them united in calling for Estrada's resignation. The Makati demonstrators declared that they would hold weekly rallies so long as Estrada refuses to resign.

This was followed by other protest actions on October 25 and 27 not only in Metro Manila but in the cities of Bacolod, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Butuan, Pagadian and Iligan. Regions outside Metro Manila also formed their own alliances like "No-Erap" (Negros Occidental-Estrada Resign as President) in Negros, I-scrap Erap (Ilonggos Solidarity Campaign to Remove Erap as President) in Panay, "Resign Now" in Davao City and "Resign, Impeach and Oust Erap Now Movement" in Butuan City.

Prior to this, a prayer rally was held on October 17 by different anti-Estrada personalities led by Corazon Aquino and Jaime Cardinal Sin. The prayer rally attended by more than 2,000 people was held at the EDSA Shrine in Mandaluyong City. The rallyists denounced Estrada for having lost the moral right to govern. Aquino also called on Estrada to resign. **AB**

VICTORIOUS TACTICAL OFFENSIVES LAUNCHED IN BICOL

A series of victorious tactical offensives was launched by the New People's Army in Bicol in October. Aside from the high-powered firearms seized by the Red fighters, four enemy troops were killed and eight were wounded in the offensives:

A cal .50 and cal .30 machine gun, an M16 and two radios were confiscated when the NPA ambushed elements of the 31st IB of the ►



NEWS of the people's struggle

Philippine Army in Sitio Patag, Barangay San Isidro, San Lorenzo Ruiz, Camarines Norte. Two soldiers were killed and six were wounded in the ambush.

Based on correspondence reports from NPA-Bicol, the ambushed soldiers were aboard an armored personnel carrier and were supposed to reinforce other 31st IB troops in Sitio Butan (in the same village) who suffered a raid by the NPA that morning. The APC was completely damaged when it hit a land mine. The soldiers, who were then subjected to a volley of fire by the Red fighters, scampered in all directions.

In related news, a soldier from the 42nd IB of the Philippine Army was killed and another soldier was wounded in an NPA ambush in the early morning of October 3. The ambushed soldiers were on foot patrol in Barangay Haguimit, Lupi, Camarines Sur. Based on a correspondence report from Comrade Ramona Caceres of the NPA-Camarines Sur Public Information Office, the offensive was successfully undertaken through information supplied by secret contacts within the AFP.

Meanwhile, a policeman was killed when Red fighters raided the Philippine National Police detachment in Tanday, Nabua, Camarines Sur on October 7. That

same day, the NPA punished Cpl. Arnulfo Esquelo in Barangay San Roque, Bulan, Sorsogon.

1 SOLDIER KILLED, 4 WOUNDED IN ABRA AMBUSH

A Philippine Army sergeant was killed while Capt. Hector Adriano and three other sergeants were wounded in an ambush by NPA Red fighters in Baay-licuan, Abra on October 23. The ambushed soldiers all belonged to the 17th IB.

1 SOLDIER, 3 CAFGU KILLED IN AGUSAN AMBUSH

A soldier and three CAFGU elements were killed in an NPA ambush on October 17 in Barangay San Policarpio, San Luis, Agusan del Sur. The ambushed troopers belonged to a composite team under the 32nd and 36th IB of the Philippine Army.

LOGGING COMPANY PUNISHED IN ISABELA

Red fighters under the NPA Benito Tesorio Front (BTF) launched a punitive action against a logging company in Isabela. NPA fighters raided on September 21 the logging pond of Liberty Logging Corp. (LLC) in Barangay Dicamay Uno, Jones and burned nine trucks, two bulldozers and a tanker. Damage to the LLC was estimated to have reached P5 billion.

Based on a correspondence report from the BTF, the company was

punished for its continued violation of the revolutionary movement's ban on corporate logging in the area. The NPA also promptly addressed the local folk's demand for a stop to logging. The offensive was successfully carried out despite relentless operations by the 502nd Brigade of the Philippine Army.

1 SOLDIER KILLED, 1 WOUNDED IN MT. PROVINCE AMBUSH

A soldier was killed and another was wounded in an ambush by Red fighters on October 2 in Bontoc, Mountain Province. The ambushed soldiers belonged to the 19th Special Forces Company of the Philippine Army.

NEW POLITICAL PARTY FORMED

A new political party, "Bayan Muna", was established on October 27, with its constituents coming from the poor sectors of society. It aims to address the issues of government corruption, foreign domination and feudal exploitation.

The party led by Satur Ocampo (president), Dr. Reynaldo Lesaca (chairman), Crispin Beltran and Nathaniel Santiago will take part in the "party-list" elections in 2001.